

# Department of Ecology Drought Declaration and Water Supply Update

**April 13, 2015**



# Today's update

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Current water supply conditions

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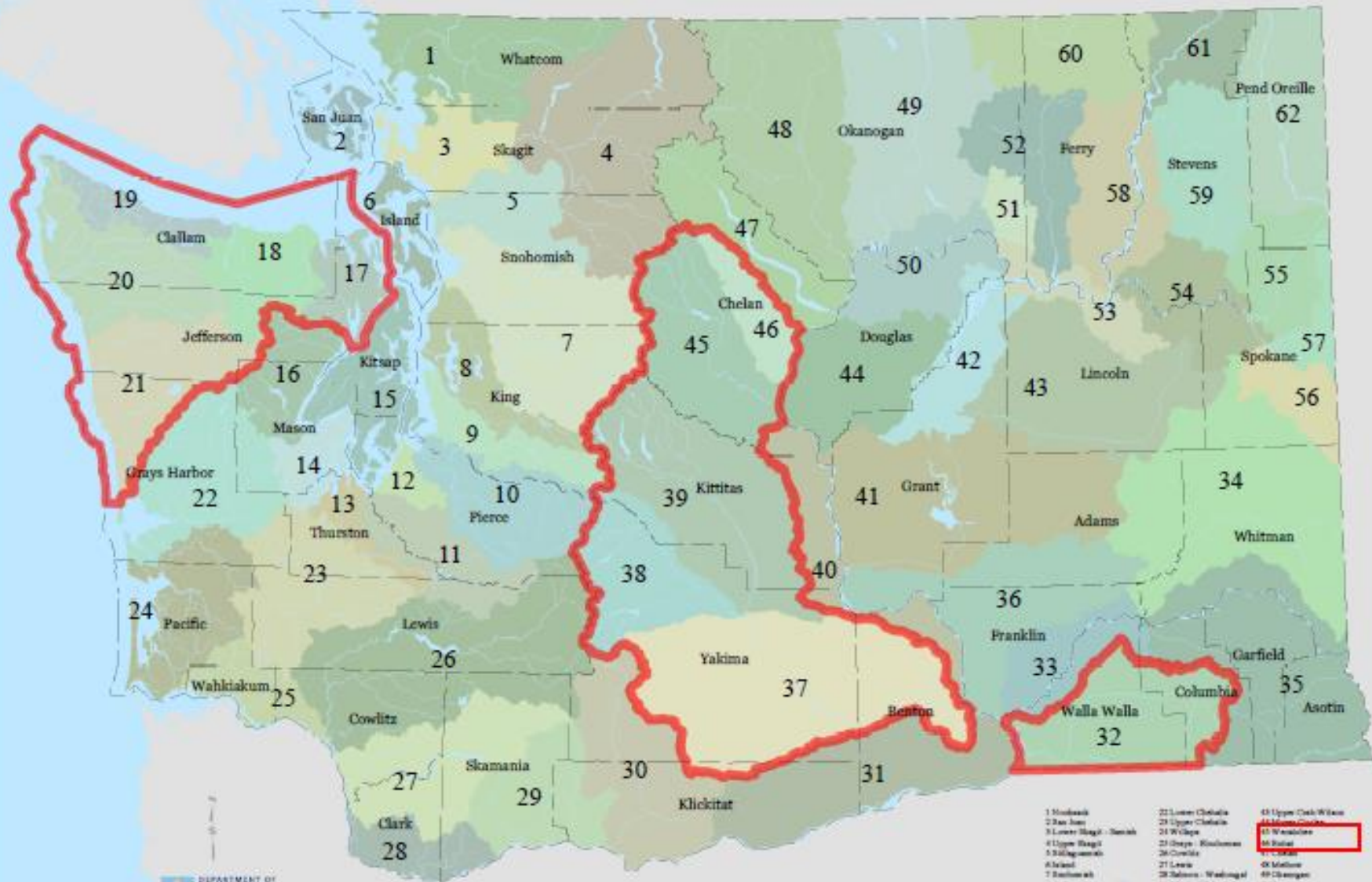
Assessing hardship

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Actions we are taking

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Next steps



WATER RESOURCES INFORMATION MANAGEMENT GIS  
ANALYSIS TOOLKIT 1/15/2015

WATER RESOURCES INFORMATION MANAGEMENT GIS 1/15/2015

The Washington State Department of Ecology does not warrant, guarantee, or make any representations regarding the use of, or results from the use of, the data in terms of completeness, accuracy, reliability, suitability, or otherwise.

Scale 1:3,000,000 Miles  
0 10 20

## 2015 Drought Declaration Regions

Areas covered by Ecology's announced emergency drought declaration regions March 13, 2015, include:  
1) The east slope of the Central Cascades including the Yakima basins, Wenatchee and Entiat watersheds.  
2) The Walla Walla river watershed.  
3) The Olympic Peninsula, primarily in Jefferson and Clallam counties.

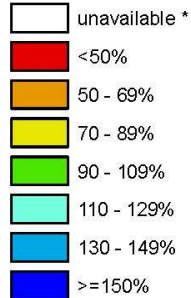
1 Whatcom	22 Lower Chehalis	43 Upper Clark/Wenatchee
2 San Juan	23 Upper Chehalis	44 Middle Chehalis
3 Skagit	24 Willapa	45 Wenatchee
4 Upper Skagit	25 Grays - Kootenai	46 Entiat
5 Snohomish	26 Cowlitz	47 Cowlitz
6 Island	27 Lewis	48 Malheur
7 King	28 Selkirk - Washington	49 Okanogan
8 Pierce	29 Walla Walla	50 Franklin
9 Thurston	30 Walla Walla	51 Columbia
10 Mason	31 Walla Walla	52 Asotin
11 Pacific	32 Walla Walla	53 Adams
12 Wahkiakum	33 Walla Walla	54 Whitman
13 Cowlitz	34 Walla Walla	55 Garfield
14 Skamania	35 Walla Walla	56 Asotin
15 Clark	36 Walla Walla	57 Walla Walla
16 Klickitat	37 Walla Walla	58 Walla Walla
17 Yakima	38 Walla Walla	59 Walla Walla
18 Benton	39 Walla Walla	60 Walla Walla
19 Grant	40 Walla Walla	61 Walla Walla
20 Douglas	41 Walla Walla	62 Walla Walla
21 Chelan	42 Walla Walla	



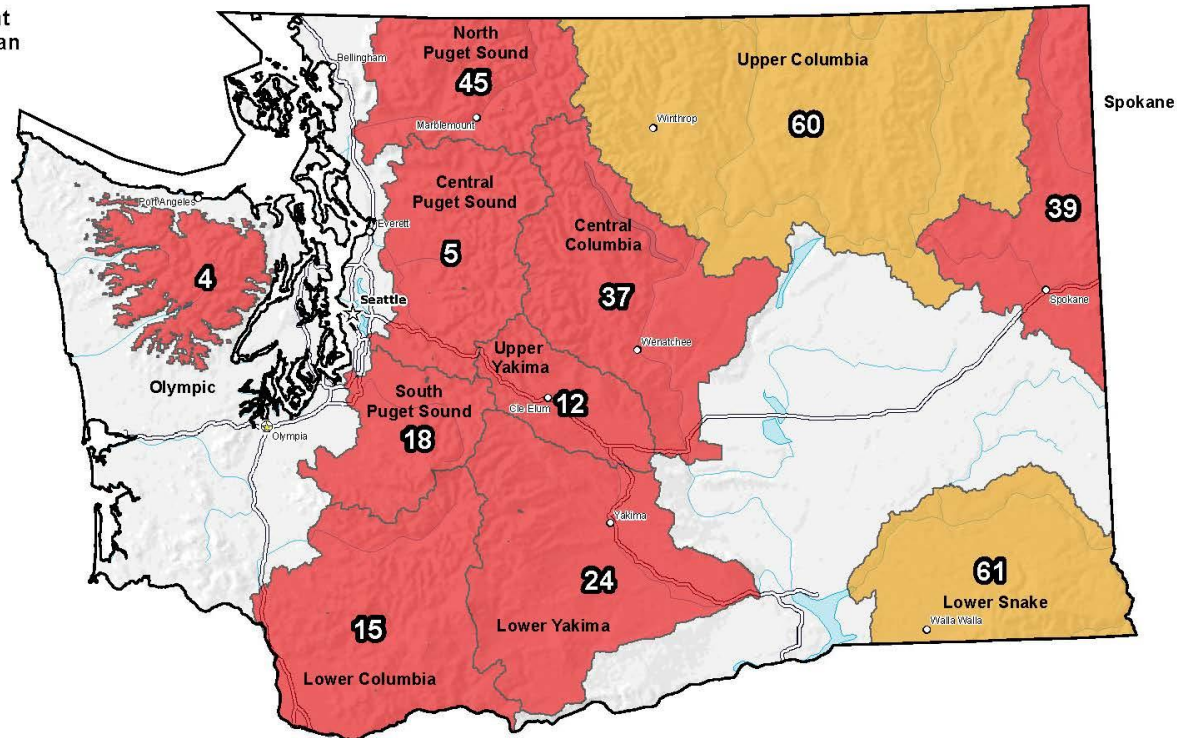
## Washington SNOTEL Current Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) % of Normal

**Apr 10, 2015**

Current Snow Water  
Equivalent (SWE)  
Basin-wide Percent  
of 1981-2010 Median



\* Data unavailable at time of posting or measurement is not representative at this time of year



*Provisional Data  
Subject to Revision*



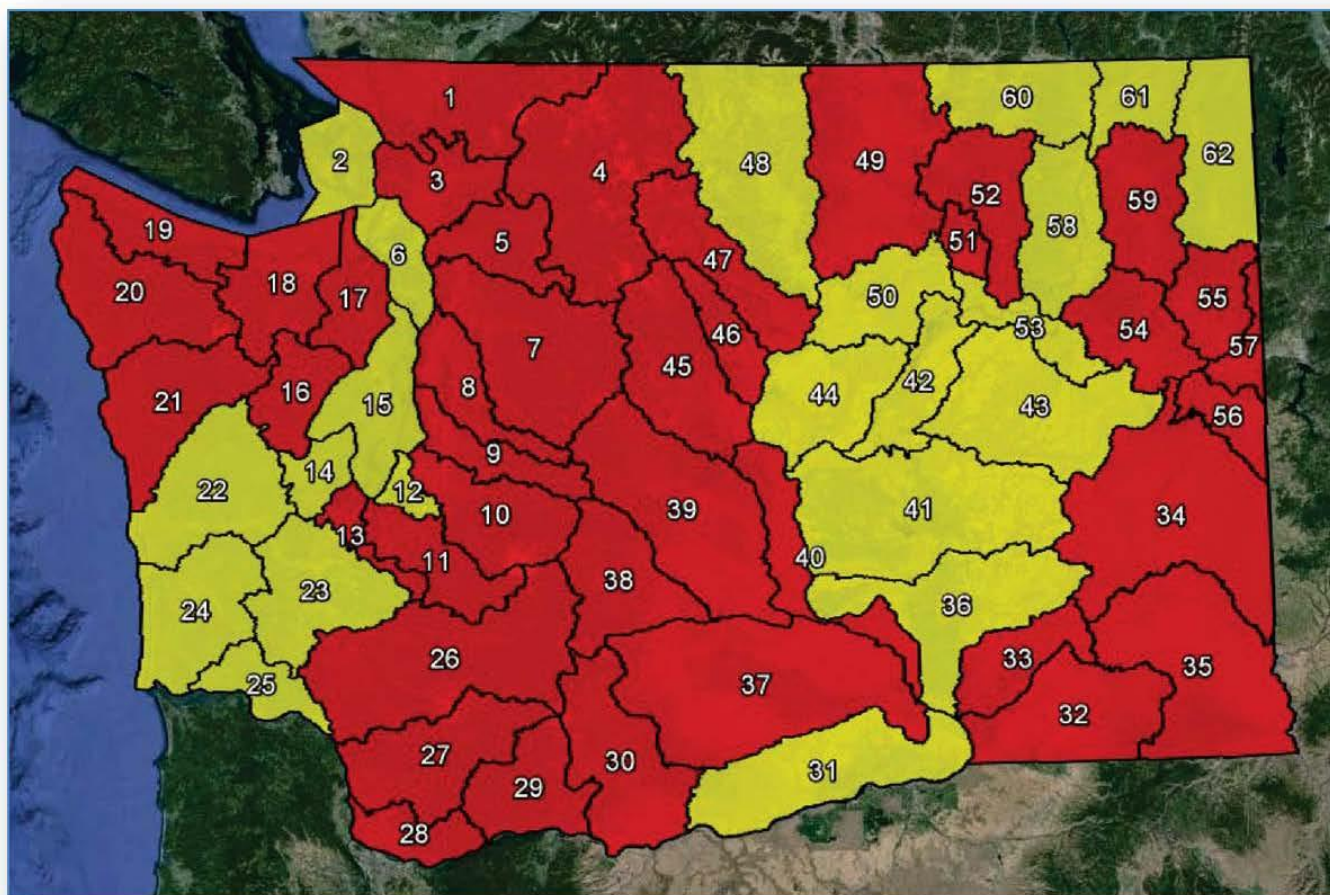
The snow water equivalent percent of normal represents the current snow water equivalent found at selected SNOTEL sites in or near the basin compared to the average value for those sites on this day. Data based on the first reading of the day (typically 00:00).

Prepared by:  
USDA/NRCS National Water and Climate Center  
Portland, Oregon  
<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>

Recommendations from April 7, 2015 WSAC for additional watersheds that are likely  
to be below 75 percent of normal supply by WRIA

*Added 6 WRIA's to Below (16, 33, 35, 40, 47, 49) and 3 WRIA's to Watch (48, 60 62)*

Part 1 of the 2 part process to declare drought in a region



31

WRIA Number



Below 75% 4/07/15



Watch 4/07/15

See back of this page for WRIA and County information

April 7, 2015



DEPARTMENT OF  
**ECOLOGY**  
State of Washington

# Evaluating hardship

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Next Emergency Water Executive Committee meeting  
scheduled April 16

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Areas of focus based on feedback we have received through  
outreach efforts to better understand hardship

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Have been reaching out to the major Puget Sound utilities,  
because of specific concerns about west slope of Cascades

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Anticipate adding more areas

# Yakima Basin

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Bureau of Reclamation forecast on March 9 : 73 percent of water supply to pro-ratable irrigators; now 60 percent

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Held two workshops, started process for leasing water rights

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Received five inquiries to use drought wells

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Working with MOU partners (Bureau of Reclamation and Yakama Nation) on mitigation program to use drought wells

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Looking to help irrigators get 70 percent of water supply; exploring cost-sharing to leverage state funds



# Considerations/Challenges

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This is a “snow pack drought” and not a precipitation drought; creating widely variable impacts and challenging communication

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Record low snow pack conditions

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Cost of water is much higher than 2005 and higher than we expected

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More permanent (tree fruit, vineyards) crops; pool of potential water rights for leasing is smaller



# Drought funding rule

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Currently drafting emergency drought funding rule

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Will be issued right after budget is approved

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Will provide framework for infrastructure improvement grants to public entities (drought wells, interties, infrastructure)

# Initial estimates for spending

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Senate appropriation for next fiscal year: \$9,000,000

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Grants to municipalities (drought wells, interties, infrastructure):  
\$2,000,000

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Assistance for irrigators to get mitigation : \$4,000,000

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Leasing for instream flow protection: up to \$1,000,000 in Yakima  
Basin and \$500,000 elsewhere

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WDFW request (hatcheries and staffing): \$1,000,000

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\$500,000 for compliance staffing, conservation education and  
added stream flow monitoring

Note: All items are  
estimates and  
subject to change

# Next Steps

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Emergency Water Executive Committee: April 16

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Leasing program is being initiated in the Dungeness Basin,  
specific timing to be determined

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Updated Bureau of Reclamation water supply forecast: May 7

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Next Water Supply Availability Committee meeting: May 8

# Thank you!

For more information, please contact:

Water Resources Program

Dave Christensen

Manager, Program Development

360.407.6647

[dave.christensen@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:dave.christensen@ecy.wa.gov)